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## SPECIMENS FROM THE NESTORIAN BURIAL SERVICE.

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The Nestorian Burial Service, from which the Ritual of the Washing was published in *HEBRAICA* of January,<sup>1</sup> well repays reading throughout. There are, to be sure, many repetitions, which become tedious after a while; but there are so many striking anthems and other poetic portions, along with many Scripture passages which appear in a new light, or, owing to the Syriac phraseology, in peculiar fitness for their special application in the service, that the several parts are extremely interesting by themselves, and the whole most beautiful. Many of these occur in the special parts of the service employed over particular classes of the dead. Were it not that a mere synopsis would be tediously long, it would be given here. It will do for the present to say that, besides the separate services for persons of every ecclesiastical grade, and for the men, the women, the youth, and the children, there are others even for the bridegroom, the bride, the rich, the strangers, the murdered, the drowned,—and still more.

It is proposed here to present a few specimens from the *pasôqa*, applicable to a few of these classes. In every case, however, there are alternations that may be sung or chanted either in addition to or in place of those here given.

The first specimen is a couple of anthems that conclude the *pasôqa* for women. The Syriac text runs as follows, most of the points being omitted, as not necessary for the reader:

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<sup>1</sup> In that article, by a double error, the leaves and pages of the MS. were said to be 148 and 296. They should be 138 and 274; two pages being blank.



Respecting the fitness of the tune specified in the first rubric, "Another," etc., it may be noted that this anthem follows a series of poetical prayers (anthems and versicles) which, with many beautiful similes, entreat the Lord to receive her, along with the blessed companies, especially the wise virgins (who furnish an abundance of beautiful similes), into the heavenly marriage feast—though that is not the only simile of the sort used. One set of versicles, for instance, contains the following: "El God, merciful Lord of created beings, mingle the soul of thy handmaid with those of the Virgins, that she may sing praise and utter voices [*i. e.* such as living creatures use as peculiar to their tribe], and multiply thanksgivings and voices of praise to thy great and holy name with all of her [being] joyfulness; that she may be a companion to the Virgins of the Parable." The rubric then takes on the dramatic, the "anthem" representing the Lord as speaking, while the versicles are the antiphonal song of priests and deacons; or, in case of a sufficiently enlightened people, of priests and congregation. The Scripture allusions in both anthem and versicle are generally plain enough. The "sirens," however, join a Scripture idea with one of the literary and folk-lore ideas. For the whole subject, see R. Payne Smith's *Thesaurus*, 2620, 2621. The Septuagint uses the word in a like signification.

With regard to the second anthem and versicles, the "Renewer of all," or "Maker anew of all things," has its origin in a number of Scripture expressions, such as Ps. CIV. 30; but cannot possibly, in Syriac, come from Apocalypse XXI. 5. The phrase occurs elsewhere in the Burial Service; *e. g.* in the anthem at the "complete burying," or filling up the grave: "*Anthem*: O King Messiah, Renewer of all in the day of thy [*lit.* his] coming, Vouchsafe to thy servant that he may sing praises at thy right hand. *Versicle*: In the day that thou comest, Messiah our King, for the proving of all, Grant to thy servant openness of face with thy holy ones." The other allusions are so manifest that I forbear to give particular references. They would likewise, if all were cited, unduly swell this article. In the Syriac, the fourth word from the end, the scribe has accidentally transposed ܐ with the ܐ .

Another specimen will doubtless be welcome in translation:

"*Another.* Of Brides. *In* [the tune of] *Blessed be our Work.*

"The Bride, whose soul is departed  
From beside the earthly bridegroom,  
Is about to become to-day  
The bride of the heavenly bridegroom.

*Versicles:*

Instead of gold and of pearls  
And the bridal veil of transitory ornament,  
In glorious light she takes delight,  
In joy which has no comparison.



[illegible]

TRANSLATION.

*"Another.* In [the tune of] 'The Voice that Calleth.' *Anthem:*

“Blessed be Christ our Redeemer, who invited the children,  
And made them heirs in the dwelling of heaven.

*Versicles :*

“ Said Sarah to Abraham, ‘ Whither takest thou him—  
This our only son whom the Lord gave us ?  
To the mountain thou art going up, with him [thither] go up I.  
Thou seekest to kill him—in his stead I will die.  
And if it be that his Lord require him, with tears let us persuade him  
That he will leave to his parents an heir, who is the last one they have.’

“Abraham took the knife, and the fire, with the wood,  
And took Isaac, his only son, and went up to the mountain.  
His mother gazed upon him, and fell on his breast,  
And kissed him and kissed him, and spake thus :  
‘My son, whom at ninety-nine years old the Lord gave us !  
Yet now that the Lord demands thee, get thee away in peace !’”

“Kissed him and kissed him” seems to me the only fit rendering of **كَلَّمَهُ** **وَكَلَّمَهُ**. “Go thou in peace” is perhaps as good a rendering of **اَمْضِ** as the one given above, which retains the accusative and keeps a reflexive color.

One more specimen will do for the children. The Syriac of the anthem reads as follows :

١٠ "حو ائستوئا . هئوئا ئستئا . هئوئا هئوئا هئوئا .

In English the anthem and the following versicles read thus ; the versicles rhyming, however, in Syriac :

“Go thou, [bit of] splendor, lighted taper,  
Beautiful abundance, sweet and bitter !

*“Versicles :*

“And as for this consuetude,  
The fruit of the tree  
Whose ingatherer was death,  
Also its spiritual transmitter,

Let the parents know  
 That precious to his God  
 Is the laborer that strays not,  
 The child without sin.

This young boy,  
 Who found rest in the harbor of the grave,  
 Is a companion with them  
 [Who are] in the kingdom of the Son.

The word here rendered "in the harbor" is the rather singular (construct ?) form **ܠܚܒܐ**, where the ordinary form **ܠܚܒܐ** or **ܠܚܒܐ** (without dropping the final **ܐ**) might have been expected, since it is a foreign word. It may, however, have been intended for the exact Greek form, nominative or accusative, *λιμὴν*. In most cases where the word commonly occurs, it would seem that the dative form had been transferred into the language.

The preceding specimens come from that part of the *pasôqa* called the *qûrbânâ*, or offering (*qûrbânê* in the plural), which some may think a separate division of the service. The canon for the *qûrbânê* is given, with certain other canons, near the end of the MS., as follows; the places here omitted, or in brackets, being the four or five words that are torn away at the corner of a leaf, where some, at least letters, must be conjecturally supplied :

"*Concerning the Qûrbânê of the Departed.* Concerning the *qûrbânê* (i. e. offerings) and commemorations and restings (requiems) which believers perform for their departed, they are not known as a canon which the apostles doubted. For if the *qûrbânê* and [commemorations] are not profitable, how do we believe that the Lord Jesus [is adorable in(?), or, magnified(?)] his honor? For he offered himself as an offering (*qûrbânâ*) to his Father, and paid the debt of our father Adam, and expiated his sin which was the cause of death. For he that doubts in this respect is no Christian, but denies the resurrection of the dead, according to the testimony of the blessed Paul, 'For if the dead rise not, neither is Christ risen;<sup>1</sup> for all of it, that he descended to Sheol, and that he will revive the dead from [their] graves, and in deed will establish the general resurrection—if Christ rose not, that preaching is vain, and our belief is a thing of nought. But that Christ rose from the dead is very truth, the signs and wonders establish, that were done at the hands of the apostles, who testified concerning the resurrection; for God did not show his powers and mighty deeds by the hands of lying witnesses; and the wise men of Greece and the philosophers of Athens would not have received the preaching that the Man Crucified rose from the dead...[world], unless they had seen signs of mighty working that was above nature, [done] by the preachers of the resurrection. Therefore the dead are more abundantly helped by

<sup>1</sup> Not an exact quotation either from the Peshitto or from the Harklensian.

qûrbânê and restings (requiems) and righteousnesses (alms) which are done in their behalf, and they attain rest of their souls and expiation of their sins, without doubt."

In the preceding parts of the pasôqa occur many anthems and versicles of which the curious might desire a specimen. The betrothed maiden, the bridegroom cut off just before his wedding, the only son of a mother, and so on, have affecting dirges sung over them; but the similes are mostly too familiar to be cited. Over strangers, besides the lamentation that he died away from his friends, and had no mother or other relations to weep over him, no familiar ones rightly to perform his obsequies, the comparison of his burial with that of Moses, whose sepulchre no man knoweth, though the angels gathered him in, is used in several ways, with extreme beauty. But to say nothing of lack of space, a translation would scarcely exhibit their excellence without the full Syriac text. The murdered have a choice of seven different anthems (with the versicles); the drowned, four, in which Peter's experience in walking on the water—saved by Jesus' hand, and the flood, serve as some of the effective comparisons. In many of them the metrical structure of the anthem adds to the force, though the variation consists in little more than the number of syllables in a verse (line). In some, as the versicles for the betrothed maiden, rhyme decidedly adds to the force. For the rich there are four anthems, which readers will doubtless be gratified to see in translation, though it would be better to see the shading from the original text:

"*Another. Of the Rich.* In the tune 'To Him that is Compassionate.' *Anthem.*

"O world, how bitter art thou!  
And thy gains are not fast held.

As for me, woe is me! What shall I do?  
For the day of judgment draws nigh, is at hand!

"*Versicles:*

"Thou didst move me, also thou didst entice (or, flatter) me  
By thy refreshments, and by thy wealth,  
And like a bird of prey thou didst bind me fast,  
And didst loose me that I may seek forgiveness.

"For thy refreshments are transitory [lit., of the filling of time],  
And their diligent quests are distress,  
And their joys not to be relied upon;  
They have sunk me in perdition.

"*Anthem:*

"Flee from the world, flee from its riches, also from its evil;  
And look and examine into the way of death, how bitter [it is].



*“Versicles :*

“Look upon me, brethren, how I wrought and how I toiled ;  
But nothing of my possessions cleaves to me, except my deeds.

“The riches of the world do not deliver the race of man,  
Nor does his substance enter with him into the kingdom.

*“Of the Rich. In the same [tune].*

“Flee from the world and from men, O man !  
And prove and see that thou certainly diest, O man !

*“Versicles :*

“The grave is thy house ; and the darkness, thy light, O man !  
And worms and the moth eat thy flesh, O man !

“Those [treasures] that thou gatheredst, for whom shall they be, O man !  
And thy debts alone go with thee, O man !

“Cursed is the world, and cursed is its riches, O man !  
And cursed is every one whosoever that loves it, O man !

*“Of the Rich. In the tune ‘Come, let us Repent.’ Anthem.*

“O inhabitant of time [i. e. temporary dweller],  
Whom his acquisitions will not deliver,  
Rest thee in the peace  
That lodgeth beside thee.

*“Versicles :*

“By thy favors I was increased,  
Yet I was despised with thee [i. e. in thy estimation] ;  
And to-day I go down  
To the grave of humiliation.

“Look on me, beloved ones,  
And remember my despising,  
And love it no more—  
The riches of this world.”